

REMARKS

Summary of Claim Status

Claims 2-51 are pending in the present application after entry of the present amendment. Applicant has withdrawn Claims 14-16 and 26-51 from consideration. Claims 2-13 and 17-25 remain active in the present application and are rejected for the reasons discussed below. Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration of the claims and withdrawal of the pending rejections and objections, in view of the present amendment and in light of the following discussion.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 2-13 and 17-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Masushige et al., JP 4-226039, August 14, 1992 ("Masushige") in view of Vu et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,256,562 ("Vu"). Applicant believes that the present amendment to Claim 6 overcomes the rejections, and places the application in form for allowance.

In particular, Applicant has amended Claim 6 to recite a method for altering the semiconductor characteristics of a semiconductor element "wherein the energy beam forms an always on current path in the semiconductor element". Support for the amendment is found in the specification as filed, for example at paragraph [0019]. Applicant respectfully submits that Masushige and Vu, either taken alone or in combination, do not teach or even suggest such a feature. In fact, such a feature would be incompatible with both Masushige and Vu.

Masushige, based on the English translation provided by the Examiner, appears to relate to a method for producing a large-area TFT (thin-film transistor) substrate. (See, e.g., Masushige at Purpose.) Similarly, Vu also relates to formation of arrays of thin film transistors on silicon substrates. (See, e.g., Vu at Abstract.) TFT substrates are

commonly used in applications such as liquid crystal displays (LCDs). (See, e.g., Vu at col. 1, lines 39-65.) As noted in Vu, such displays operate by switching liquid crystals or electroluminescent materials on and off by the thin film transistors. (Vu, at col. 1, lines 39-44.) Thus, it is essential to the operation of both Masushige and Vu that the transistors in the TFT array be capable of being turned on and off in order to apply or remove an electric field from the liquid crystal material. Thus, a semiconductor device having an always on current path would cause both Masushige and Vu to fail at their stated purpose. In fact, such an always on current path in TFTs would typically cause "stuck pixels" in LCDs, and are considered manufacturing defects. That is, forming an always on current path in either Masushige or Vu would lead to a defective product.

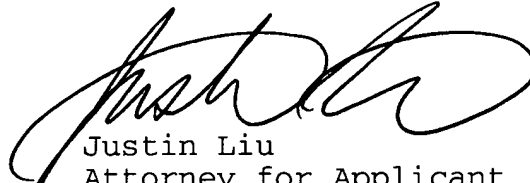
Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that it would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to combine Masushige and Vu in the manner recited by Claim 6. In fact, it would have been contrary to the teachings of both Masushige and Vu, either taken alone or in combination. Therefore, for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicant believes Claim 6 is allowable, and allowance of Claim 6 is respectfully requested.

Claims 2-5, 7-13 and 17-25 depend, either directly or indirectly, from Claim 6 and thus include all the limitations of Claim 6. Therefore, for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to Claim 6, Applicant believes Claims 2-5, 7-13 and 17-25 are allowable, and respectfully requests allowance of such claims.

Conclusion

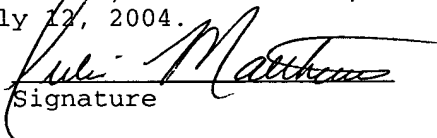
No new matter has been introduced by any of the above amendments. Applicant requests that the Examiner reconsider the final rejection and consider the above amendment and arguments. These arguments are believed to clearly indicate that the application including Claims 2-13 and 17-25 are now in form for allowance. Therefore, Applicant requests allowance of the application. If any action other than allowance is contemplated by the Examiner, the Examiner is invited to telephone Applicant's attorney at 408-879-4641.

Respectfully submitted,


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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first-class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. BOX 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on July 12, 2004.

Julie Matthews
Name


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